

Book Reviews

The Western Journal of Medicine does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

DIGESTIVE DISEASES—Editors: John T. Galambos, MD, Professor of Medicine; Director, Division of Digestive Diseases, Emory University School of Medicine, Atlanta; and Theodore Hersh, MD, Professor, Division of Digestive Diseases, Department of Medicine, Emory University School of Medicine. Butterworths, 10 Tower Office Park, Woburn, MA 01801, 1983. 701 pages, \$49.95.

The editors were assisted by the faculty of the Emory University School of Medicine in writing a practical handbook of clinical gastroenterology. Its stated goal is to help physicians in patient care. It is organized in two parts. Part one deals with common gastrointestinal symptoms and abnormal physical and laboratory findings. Part two deals with specific disease entities. There is an appendix on radiology.

The topics are covered in a commonsense manner. The discussions are quite superficial: lean on physiology but heavy on opinion as to how to approach the problems posed. This opinion is derived from the "clinical experience" of the authors. There are very few literature citations. The quality of the chapters is variable as one would expect from a multiauthored work. Those by Dr Galambos on liver disease are quite good; the remainder less so. The topics are selected; there are notable omissions. There is no consideration of carcinoma of the esophagus, stomach or small bowel. The proofreading was poor. Laboratory function tests are under the heading of physical examination. In the section on anorectal disease, there is a subsection on miscellaneous oral (anal?) diseases.

I cannot recommend this book for its targeted audience of primary care physicians, consultants, house officers and students. There are large gaps in the topics covered. The diagnostic and therapeutic recommendations are opinionated and do not discuss reasonable options. The treatment of the subject matter is frequently superficial, but this may be because of the space limitations imposed by a handbook.

HOWARD A. SHAPIRO, MD
Clinical Professor of Medicine
University of California, San Francisco
School of Medicine

* * *

DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASE—Editor: D. Craig Miller, MD; Associate Editor: Anthony J. Roon, MD; Series Editor: Donald C. Harrison, MD; Foreword by Norman E. Shumway, MD, PhD. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc. Health Sciences Division, 2727 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025, 1982. 314 pages, \$34.95.

The volume of literature on clinical vascular disease related topics has expanded enormously in the last five years with both comprehensive texts that address the entire field and those that specifically address individual topics such as noninvasive diagnosis, aneurysm surgical procedures and cerebrovascular disease. In large measure, these have been directed toward practicing vascular surgeons and yet many of the clinical advances in the field in both diagnosis and treatment have not yet been appreciated by primary care physicians, while students are so overwhelmed by the sheer volume of facts in such texts that they too have difficulty in determining what is clinically relevant.

The editors have addressed this need by compiling a relatively short, easily readable monograph that covers the areas of vascular disease of greatest clinical relevance. The choice of authors for the individual chapters is appropriate in that all are contributors of considerable stature, and each provides a basic, concise and yet informative review of clinical vascular disease topics.

The sequence of chapters in the initial portion of the book

is well designed to provide the reader with a logical progression from history and physical examination through the various noninvasive and invasive diagnostic techniques and the chapters on arteriographic techniques in particular are well presented and well illustrated. The organization of the remaining chapters would have been improved by a closer grouping of topics dealing with similar or related diseases, as for example could have been accomplished by grouping the discussion on chronic arterial insufficiency of the lower extremities with those on acute arterial insufficiency and atheroembolism. This would then have provided a more logical progression of the chapters on aortic diseases without interposing those on cerebrovascular and thoracic outlet problems. These issues, however, are largely a matter of style and are not serious deficiencies.

The organization of individual chapters facilitates recognition of the important aspects of the condition being discussed although for the audience to whom this is projected, a more uniform approach in each chapter may have improved the comprehension. For example, a discussion of the natural history of each of the individual topics would enable the reader to focus more sharply on the merits of surgical intervention. The value of such an approach is best appreciated in the chapter on lower extremity occlusive disease which provides the reader with a clear appreciation of the relative unimportance of intermittent claudication with regard to limb loss while stressing the value of this symptom complex in identifying a patient population at risk from the complications of generalized atherosclerosis. Against this background, the role of surgical therapy has been clearly outlined. In a similar manner, the chapter on venous thromboembolic disease provides the reader with a lucid understanding of these conditions with an equally clear discussion of treatment options. The absence of this approach in all chapters is responsible for the impression that the text is written predominantly by surgeons (which it is) and will probably result in both students and internists alike, to whom the book is primarily directed, concluding incorrectly that only the surgical side of the story is presented.

The introductory chapter on history and physical examination suffers from providing pathologic and epidemiological data in the midst of physical examination methods, which tends to divert the reader's attention from the otherwise well-described techniques. For example, when the diagnosis of abdominal aortic aneurysms is discussed, the authors incorrectly state that the majority of aneurysms are symptomatic (perhaps an editorial error) but then discuss a number of unusual complications without stressing that rupture is by far the most frequent. Because such factors are well covered in later chapters, for the sake of clarity this type of information would have been best deleted from this section. Unfortunately, a number of spelling errors throughout the text also detract from the overall appeal.

In the main, however, the content of chapters is well organized and clear. Each is complemented by a comprehensive but not exhausting list of appropriate references, and in spite of the relatively minor criticisms already noted, the authors are to be congratulated for compiling an informative, introductory text on peripheral vascular disease, the necessity for which has existed for too long.

BRIAN L. THIELE, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery
University of Washington
Chief, Peripheral Vascular Section
Veterans Administration Medical Center
Seattle